

Wolf Pack volunteers celebrate Halloween with orphans

*By 1st Lt. Ben Frankenfield
8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs*

More than 40 Korean orphans carved pumpkins and enjoyed other Halloween festivities at the 8th Civil Engineer Squadron hooch Saturday.

The Company Grade Officer's Council sponsored the event, which entertained the 2 to 18-year-olds from Kae Chong orphanage near Kunsan City.

Capt. Tony Figiera, 8th CES chief of construction and president of Kunsan's chapter of CGOC, said there was a good turnout of volunteers from base organizations.

The 8th CES provided the facility, decorations, construction vehicles and a fire truck for the kids to play on, as well as many volunteers, according to Figiera. "CE has sponsored other events for the orphans at the hooch in the past," said Figiera. "I was interested in continuing the tradition with the help and finances of the CGOC."

The more frightening aspects of Halloween were avoided, since Korea does not celebrate it.

"We didn't want to scare the kids," said Senior Airman Lanie McNeal, 8th Communications Squadron still photographer, who coordinates activities between the base and the orphanage. "So we kept it more carnival style."

"The best part was the pumpkin carving," Figiera said. "I was concerned that they wouldn't enjoy this uniquely American past time. However, they caught on quickly and had a great time making a mess and carving some creative jack-o-lanterns."

The hooch was decorated with Halloween themes, the kids bobbed for apples, got their faces painted, played games, ate hot dogs and cup cakes, and drank cider.

And of course, candy was given out. "They [orphans] love American

candy," McNeal said. "Korean candy is pretty bland so they enjoy American sweets."

"It was great to see them have a good time. Obviously they have challenges in their lives that many of us do not," Figiera said. "It's always nice to bring joy to those less fortunate than ourselves. It was great to see them so excited to experience some American and Air Force culture."

McNeal along with other Kunsan members volunteer at the orphanage once a week. Tentative plans are being made for the upcoming holidays.

"We are planning on having a traditional Thanksgiving meal and Christmas meal for the orphans," said McNeal.

Call Senior Airman Lanie McNeal at 782-4106 for more information on volunteering time at the orphanage.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Stan Parker

Airman 1st Class Aaron Davenport, 8th Civil Engineer Squadron explosive ordnance disposal, takes a moment to paint the face of 5-year-old Jong Min Nov. 3. About 40 children from the local Kae Chong orphanage were thrown a Halloween party by the Company Grade Officer's Council.



Above: 1st Lt. Brian Nazarian, 8th CES, and Senior Airman Lanie McNeal, 8th Communication Squadron, prepare hotdogs for the children.



Above: Senior Airmen Joe Pietrazek, 8th Mission Support Squadron and Anthony Paternoster, 8th Comptroller Flight, (left to right) take a break from the children to paint the face of Staff Sgt. Tayna Allen, 8th CS. Right: Paternoster enjoys a quiet moment as his nose is tugged by Shim Yong.

